(b) No.

(c) Government does not take cognisance of an internal exercise of the U.S. Government and it has no bearing on Government's ability to deal with the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Extradition of Abu Salem

5056. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that the Portuguese Legal Authorities have told their Government that Abu Salem wanted in connection with 1993 Mumbai blasts can be deported to India;

(b) If so, how India is going to secure the return of Salem in the absence of an extradition treaty with Lisbon; and

(c) the details of the procedure to get around the legal requirements of an Extradition treaty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA) : (a) Request for extradition of Abu Salem, who was arrested in Portugal in 2002 on the basis of an Interpol Red Corner Alert, is under consideration of the Portugese authorities.

(b) and (c) Absence of Extradition Treaty does not bar consideration of an extradition request. In view of friendly relations with India, Portugal agreed to consider India's request for extradition of Abu Salem under its domestic laws

Malta Boat Tragedy

5057. SHRI B. P. SINGHAL : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of Malta Boat Tragedy that occurred on the 25th December, 1996 killing 3000 youths from India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan;

(b) if so, whether Government would release the list of the Indian victims and provide relief to their families; and

(c) if so, by when if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA) : (a) Yes, but the total number of victims was estimated to be only 300.

(b) and (c) The Government of India had provided a list of 79 victims, as obtained from the survivors of the tragedy, to the Government of Punjab in January 1997. The Government of Punjab had sanctioned *ex-gratia* payment of Rs. 50,000 to the family of each victim.

Transferring Malta Boat Tragedy case to European Tribunal

5058. SHRI B. P. SINGHAL : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would take the Malta Boat Tragedy case to the European Tribunal based in Brussels (Belgium) for the claims of the victims families and also pursue the claim cases filed by the victims families in Italian Courts;

(b) whether Government would handover the CBI case against the 27 Indian culprits going on in Delhi to a Special Court for speedy disposal; and

(c) whether Government would sponsor the endeavors of the Malta Boat Tragedy Probe Mission and give official recognition to the NGOs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA) : (a) There is no proposal to take the Malta Boat Tragedy case to the European Tribunal based in Brussels, Belgium. The preliminary hearing of the case in Italy is scheduled for May 27, 2003. The relatives of the victims may, at that stage, implaed themselves as plaintiffs and sue for damages.

(b) As the case is currently being heard by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Delhi, there is no proposal to hand it over to a Special Court.

(c) While the Government has afforded all possible assistance to the Malta Boat Tragedy Probe Mission in pursuing the interests of the victims and their families, it does not feel that there is a need for official recognition of the NGO for this purpose.

Amendment in the Labour Laws

5059. SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce amendments in the Labour Laws seeking to open core and non-core sectors in the contract labour.